

News Letter

December 1970
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OF THE SAN FRANCISCO MARITIME MUSEUM



ANTELOPE

photograph from the Eric Steinfeldt Collection

For those of you who, like this writer, may not be overly impressed with super-tankers, super-747s, super-skyscrapers, and the biggest pumpkin at the State Fair, there is often great pleasure to be derived from the miniature, the more modestly proportioned, the things that do not seem too out of human scale.

Hence our great pleasure in the above photograph sent to us by Eric Steinfeldt. The picture is one half of an early stereopticon slide of a small bark in what Mr. Steinfeldt believes to be a West Indian port. She bears the name ANTELOPE. Her lines, proportions, sheer, and lofty rig speak a Yankee deepwaterman in the classic tradition. It is only when one studies the photograph and notes the figures of men on her deck that one realizes with something of a shock what a tiny craft she is. A search of the ship registers identifies her most probably as a bark built in Kennebunkport, Maine, in 1864 and owned by Rocha Brothers and Co. of New York; her tonnage is a mere 184!

Small ships and barks from the New England ports were not uncommon in the centuries-old but still-lucrative West Indies trade. But even in that fleet, a 104-ft. hull carrying such lofty bark rig must have been notable.

Mr. Steinfeldt is to be congratulated on his discovery of this superb photographic ship portrait.

MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS

Visitors to the Museum during the past two years have been puzzled by the heavy rope lashings around the huge carved wooden statue of Mary, Queen of Scots, which served as the figurehead of the STAR OF SCOTLAND. The ropes were not symbolic of that royal lady's misfortunes, but were a temporary remedy to deal with dangerously widening cracks which threatened to send the whole front of the figure crashing to the floor.

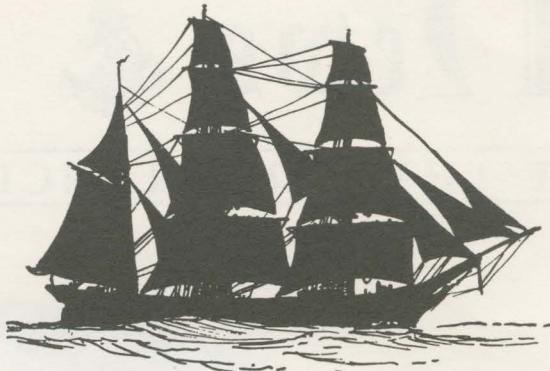
Early this summer a crew of boys from the Mayor's Youth Program, under the direction of Richard Childress, and with the help of BAL-CLUTHA rigger Ib Riis, removed the heavy statue from its base and took it to the Museum basement.

There, after weeks of careful repair and restoration by Curatorial Assistant Steve Canright, the figurehead is nearing completion and will soon be in its proper museum setting again.

Thanks to carefully concealed heavy iron bolts through the figure, Mary, Queen of Scots will reign again—this time safely and unencumbered.

A LIBRARY GIFT

Our Museum Library has received another great addition. The Alameda Free Library has deposited with us a valuable bibliographic tool in order to



make it available to a wider public than it would attract in the East Bay city.

Thus we are the recipient of an eighteen-volume catalogue of books, prints, maps and photographs in the great Mariners Museum Collection at Newport News. We are very grateful to Alameda for this fine addition to our research materials.

A NOTEWORTHY BOOK

Though it is not a brand-new book, we feel compelled to recommend to our readers a most unusual one, published last year by Pantheon. The author, Fred Duncan, was born on the ship FLORENCE, of which his father was master, in 1887. He lived on board until his family left the ship in 1898.

Here is recorded a childhood such as few have known and none will ever know again. It was a childhood of life at sea, punctuated with visits to exotic ports, of storms and fair winds, and of a warm family life aboard the ship.

As a child, the author did not view his life as extraordinary. But as a grown man, Mr. Duncan has realized how nearly unique his experience was. He has recorded in exact detail an account of family life aboard a down-Easter in the closing decade of the nineteenth century. The book is well-illustrated with contemporary photographs.

An afterword by our director, Karl Kortum, points out the significance of the down-East type of ship in American merchant-marine history, and the unusual character of Fred Duncan's narrative of a boy's life at sea.

Again, we heartily recommend: Fred B. Duncan, *Deepwater Family*, New York, Pantheon Books, 1969. \$4.95.

—A. Harmon, Librarian

PAINTINGS by MARK MYERS on view at BALCLUTHA

For years we have regarded Mark Myers as our own "artist-in-residence."

He first became known to us as a fifteen-year-old youth who was producing amazingly detailed drawings of sailing ships. We watched his growth as both an artist and a marine historian, the latter role under the expert tutelage of Dr. John H. Kemble of Pomona College.

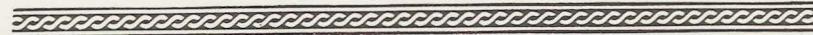
Mark's education has been most unusual for a mid-twentieth century artist, for it has included sailing before the mast on both schooners and square-riggers. His knowledge of rigs and rigging has come from practical experience with rigs as varied as the lateen rig of the seventeenth century and the massive rigging of the great nineteenth-century steel ships.

His growth as an artist from the meticulous line of his boyhood drawings, through growing mastery of the intricacies of watercolor and oil has culminated in a great ease with his medium. A recent commission for the *National Geographic Magazine* attests to his ability.

Now he is showing a collection of paintings of California ships on board the BALCLUTHA. We invite all members to enjoy these paintings, all of which are for sale.

This is Mark's second show under the auspices of the S.F.M.M. The first was an exhibit of the paintings presented as a requirement for his bachelor's degree from Pomona College.

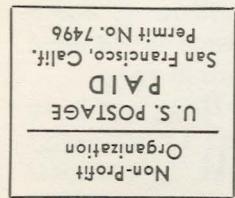
The paintings will remain on view through January 1971.



*We wish all our Members and Friends
a Happy and Peaceful New YEAR*

*--the Trustees, Director and Staff of the
San Francisco Maritime Museum*

return guaranteed



AT THE FOOT OF POLK STREET, SAN FRANCISCO 94109
SAN FRANCISCO MARITIME MUSEUM

News Letter

News Letter is sent to members of the San Francisco Maritime Museum, a private, nonprofit historical society. Interested non-members are cordially invited to join the Museum to help support its program of the preservation and display of Pacific Coast maritime history.—Albert Harmon, Editor